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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 19 December 2016

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/71/476)*]

71/166. Literacy for life: shaping future agendas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 56/116 of 19 December 2001, by which it proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2003 the United Nations Literacy Decade, its resolution 57/166 of 18 December 2002, in which it welcomed the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade,[1] and its resolutions 59/149 of 20 December 2004, 61/140 of 19 December 2006, 63/154 of 18 December 2008, 65/183 of 21 December 2010, 68/132 of 18 December 2013 and 69/141 of 18 December 2014,

Recalling also the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[2] which includes Sustainable Development Goal 4 on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, with a specific target on ensuring that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030,

Convinced that literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, young person and adult of the essential life skills that will enable them to address the challenges that they may face in life and represents an essential condition of lifelong learning, which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the knowledge societies and economies of the twenty-first century,

Reaffirming the right of indigenous peoples to have non-discriminatory access to all levels and forms of education provided by States, and recognizing the importance of effective measures to promote access for indigenous individuals, in particular children, to education in their own language, whenever possible, as addressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,[3]

Deeply concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 758 million adults lack basic literacy skills, that, of the world's 650 million primary-school-age children, at least 250 million, many of whom are from disadvantaged backgrounds, are not acquiring basic skills in reading

[1] See A/57/218 and Corr.1.

[2] Resolution 70/1.

[3] Resolution 61/295, annex.

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and mathematics, that an estimated 124 million children and adolescents worldwide remain out of school, especially in rural areas, and that these challenges are distributed in an uneven manner across countries and populations,

Recognizing that substantial and efficiently spent investments are needed to improve the quality of education in order to enable millions of people to acquire literacy skills for decent work,

Recognizing also that literacy is a foundation for lifelong learning, a building block for achieving human rights and fundamental freedoms and a driver of sustainable development and that the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012) had a catalytic effect as a global framework for sustained and focused efforts for the promotion of literacy and literate environments,

Recalling the International Conference on Girls' and Women's Literacy and Education: Foundations for Sustainable Development, held in Dhaka and co-hosted by the Government of Bangladesh and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in support of the Global Education First Initiative and on the occasion of International Literacy Day, on 8 September 2014, and taking note with appreciation of the adoption of the Dhaka Declaration,

Affirming that the realization of the right to education, especially for girls, contributes to the promotion of human rights, gender equality and the eradication of poverty, as well as to development,

Recognizing the importance of continuing to implement national programmes and measures to eliminate illiteracy worldwide as reflected in the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All, adopted on 28 April 2000 at the World Education Forum,[4] and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard recognizing also the important contribution of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation through, inter alia, innovative pedagogical methods in literacy,

Deeply concerned about the persistence of the gender gap in education, which is reflected by the fact that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, nearly two thirds of the world's non-literate adults are women,

Concerned that, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, one third of the children not attending school are children with disabilities and that the literacy rate among adults with disabilities is as low as 3 per cent in some countries,

Deeply concerned about the impact of disrupted educational services in humanitarian emergencies on efforts to promote literacy skills, especially for all children and young people,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas and education for democracy";[5]

[4] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

[5] A/71/177.

2. *Commends* the efforts made by Member States, their development partners, the international donor community, the private sector, civil society and the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, including the lead organization of the United Nations Literacy Decade, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in promoting enjoyment of the right to education, including by making progress on the five strategic axes of action for the period following the Decade;

3. *Calls upon* Governments to scale up literacy programmes for children, youth and adults, with particular attention to those who are vulnerable or marginalized, to foster innovative delivery of literacy services, including through technology and a strengthened institutional network, to promote an intersectoral approach by linking literacy learning with multiple sectors to address diverse learning needs, such as through relevant and inclusive educational resources in different languages, to establish multi-stakeholder partnerships with the active participation of civil society and the private sector, to improve distance and digital learning resources and to develop a data-collection mechanism to assess levels of literacy;

4. *Encourages* Member States, United Nations organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, regional organizations, civil society, academia and the private sector to sustain their collective efforts for the promotion of literacy and literate environments and to contribute to shaping the Global Alliance for Literacy within the framework of lifelong learning into an effective platform for synergistic action at the global, regional, national and community levels;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity, and calls upon Member States and other stakeholders to consider implementing the recommendations contained therein;

6. *Calls upon* States, and invites other relevant stakeholders, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[2] including all literacy-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to continue its coordinating and catalysing role through the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Alliance for Literacy and by continuing to provide support to Member States, in collaboration with partners, in enhancing capacities for policy formulation, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation, as well as sharing information and knowledge on policies, programmes and progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal targets connected with literacy, especially target 4.6 on youth and adult literacy, and creating synergies of action between the Alliance and other initiatives, including its Global Partnership for Girls' and Women's Education and Global Network of Learning Cities;

8. *Encourages* efforts to provide quality education in safe learning environments for all, especially for boys, girls and youth, in humanitarian emergencies to contribute to a smooth transition from relief to development;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled "Social development", the sub-item entitled "Literacy for life: shaping future agendas".

65th plenary meeting
19 December 2016